IMPROVING HOMICIDE CLEARANCES

WHAT WE KNOW AND COULD KNOW

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OUTLINE OF TALK

- TRENDS IN HOMICIDES
- TRENDS IN HOMICIDE CLEARANCES
- VARIATIONS IN 100 LARGEST CITIES
- FOUR CITY STUDY OF CLEARANCES
- CONCLUSIONS

TRENDS IN HOMICIDES

Bureau of Justice Statistics Homicide trends in the United States

www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/homicide

Date of release: September 28 2004

"Homicide victimization, 1	950-2002"
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Homiciae	Victimization, 1750-200) <u>_</u>
Year	Homicide Rate	Estimated Number of
Homicides		
1950	4.6	7020
1951	4.4	6820
1952	4.6	7210
1953	4.5	7210
1954	4.2	6850
1955	4.1	6850
1956	4.1	6970
1957	4	8060
1958	4.8	8220
1959	4.9	8580
1960	5.1	9110
1961	4.8	8740
1962	4.6	8530
1963	4.6	8640
1964	4.9	9360
1965	5.1	9960
1966	5.6	11040
1967	6.2	12240
1968	6.9	13800
1969	7.3	14760
1970	7.9	16000
1971	8.6	17780
1972	9	18670
1973	9.4	19640
1974	9.8	20710
1975	9.6	20510
1976	8.8	18780
1977	8.8	19120
1978	9	19560
1979	9.7	21460



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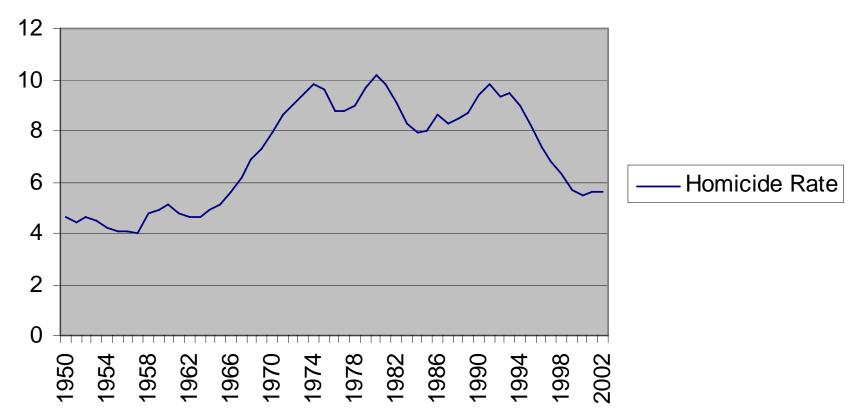
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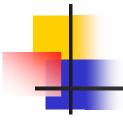
	ear	Homicide Rate	Estimated Number of Homicides
	980	10.2	23040
19	981	9.8	22520
19	982	9.1	21010
19	983	8.3	19308
19	984	7.9	18692
19	985	8	18976
19	986	8.6	20613
19	987	8.3	20096
19	988	8.5	20675
19	989	8.7	21500
19	990	9.4	23438
19	991	9.8	24703
19	992	9.3	23760
19	993	9.5	24526
19	994	9	23326
19	995	8.2	21606
19	996	7.4	19645
19	997	6.8	18208
19	998	6.3	16974
19	999	5.7	15522
20	000	5.5	15586
20	001	5.6	16037
20	002	5.6	16204

[&]quot;* Rate per 100,000 population"
"Source: FBI, Uniform Crime Reports, 1950-2002"

Homicide victimization 1950-2002







TRENDS IN CLEARANCES



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Year Percent cleared

1976 79

1977 76

1978 76

1979 73

1980 72

1981 72

1982 74

1983 76

1984 74

1985 72

1986 70

1987 70

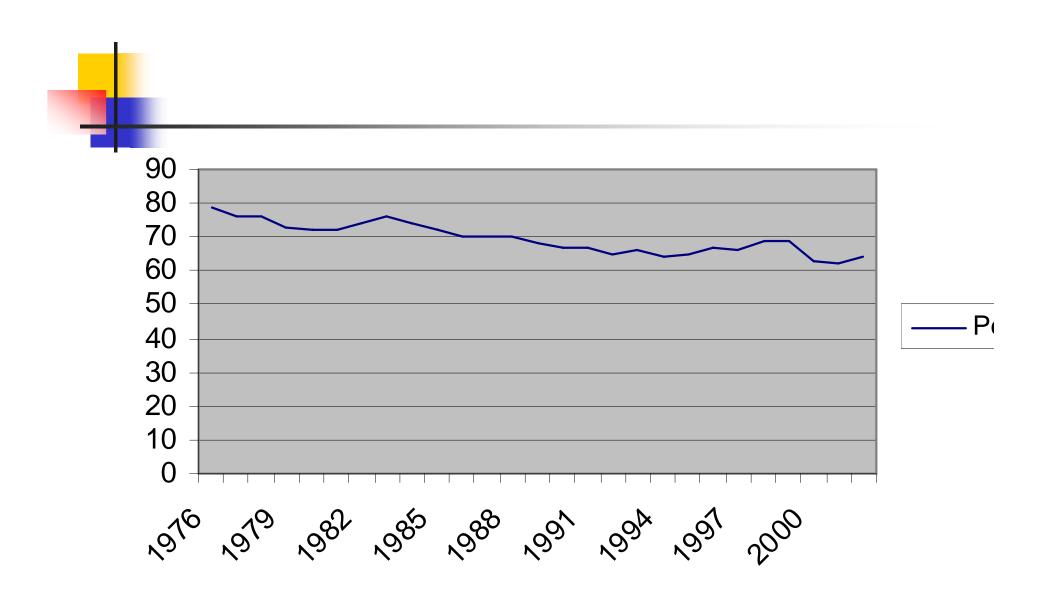
1988 70

(COIIL.)

1989	68
1990	67 -
1991	67
1992	65
1993	66
1994	64
1995	65
1996	67
1997	66
1998	69
1999	69
2000	63
2001	62
2002	64

"Source: FBI, Supplementary Homicide Reports, 1976-2002" See the methodology section in 'Additional Information About the Data' for weighting and imputation procedures used.

by Arrest



Bureau of Justice Statistics Homicide trends in the United States

www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/homicide

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Homicide Victims by Circumstance

Year	Felony	Argum	ent	Gang	Other	Unknown
1976	3327	9106	129	4630	1588	
1977	3189	8929	180	4112	2709	
1978	3262	8950	194	4447	2706	
1979	3623	9237	264	4534	3803	
1980	4070	10299	221	4963	3486	
1981	3882	9519	280	4835	4005	
1982	3721	8613	238	4322	4116	
1983	3479	8469	260	3058	4044	
1984	3382	8211	223	2708	4166	
1985	3388	8284	288	2690	4329	
1986	3992	8602	357	3015	4644	
1987	3935	8087	395	2678	5005	

Homicide Victims by Circumstance

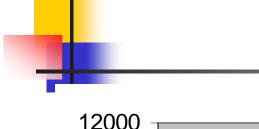
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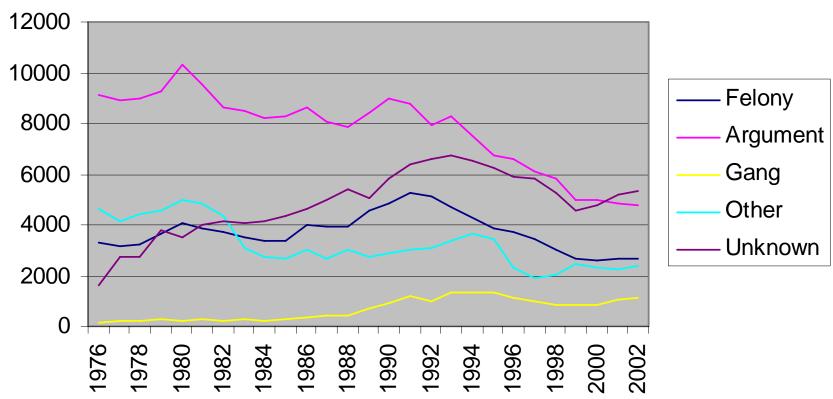
				(Cont.)	
<mark>1</mark> 988	3932	7872	428	3010	5437
1989	4593	8433	678	2709	5086
1990	4867	8988	905	2867	5812
1991	5283	8806	1192	3027	6393
1992	5143	7950	994	3110	6563
1993	4721	8309	1362	3403	6735
1994	4303	7529	1340	3622	6536
1995	3829	6753	1331	3451	6246
1996	3690	6620	1091	2331	5918
1997	3413	6103	999	1888	5807
1998	2998	5845	834	2048	5245
1999	2642	4993	837	2455	4594
2000	2626	4988	846	2331	4795
2001	2694	4840	1071	2246	5187
2002	2656	4752	1119	2371	5305

[&]quot;Source: FBI, Supplementary Homicide Reports, 1976-2002"

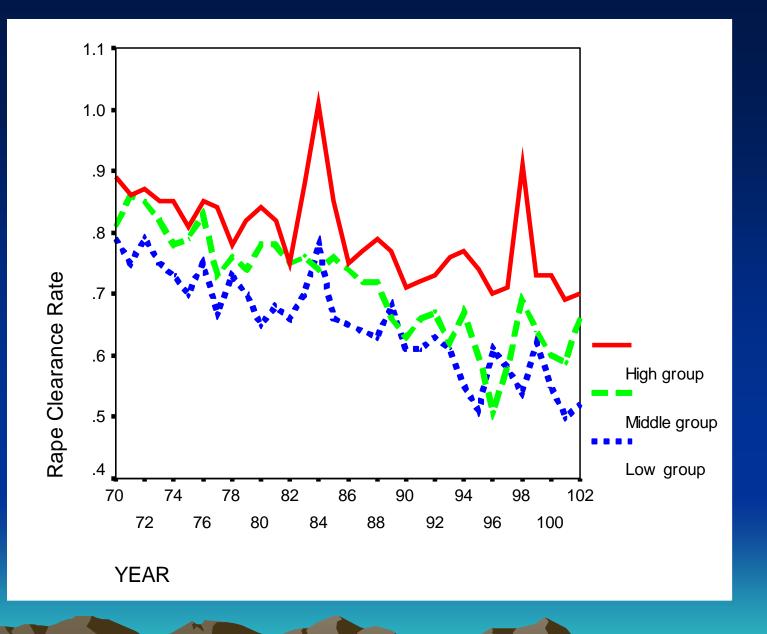
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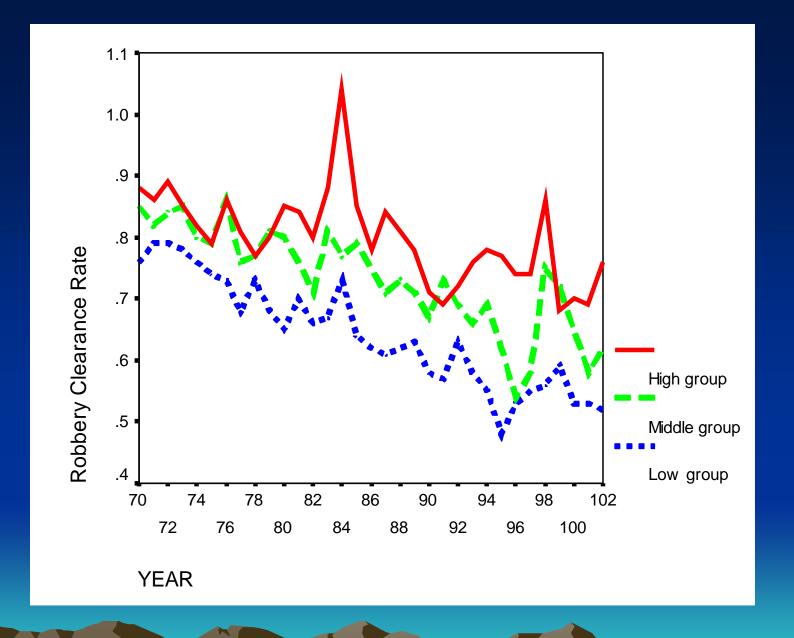
Homicide Victims by Circumstance

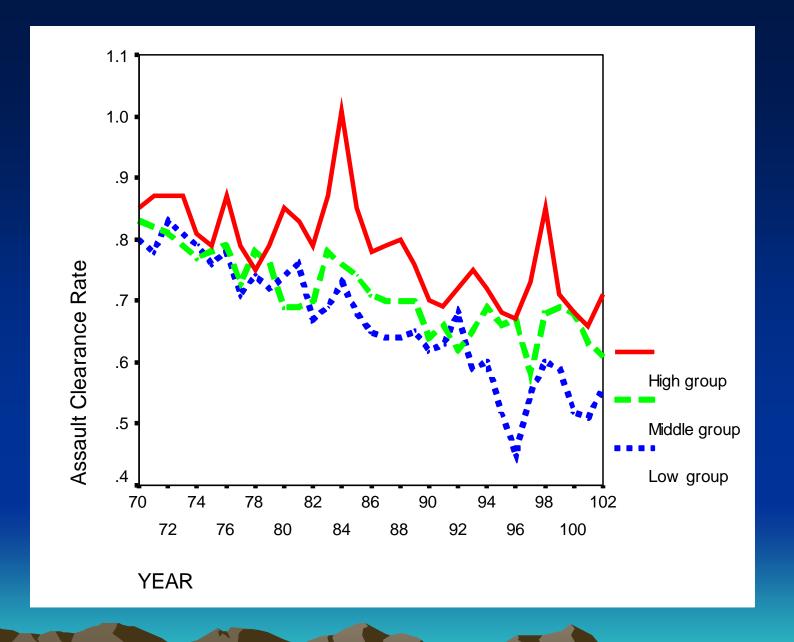


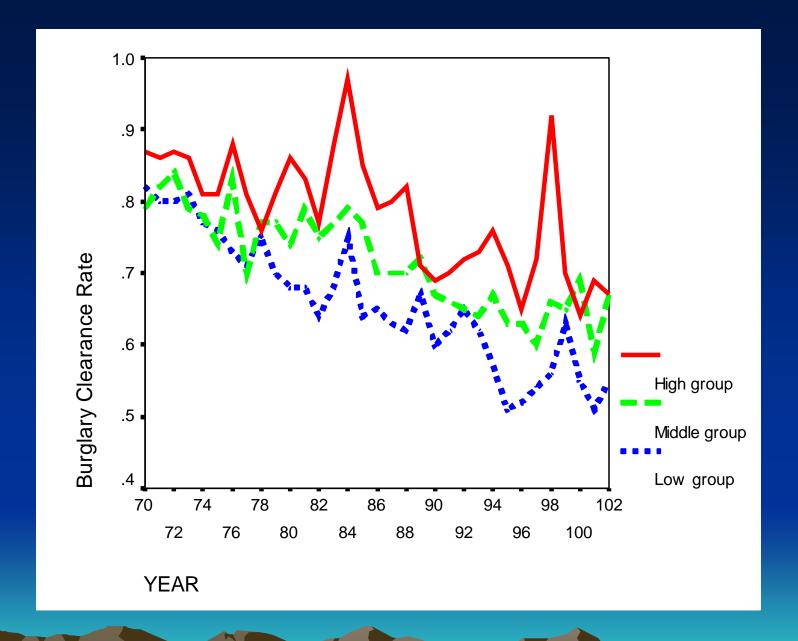


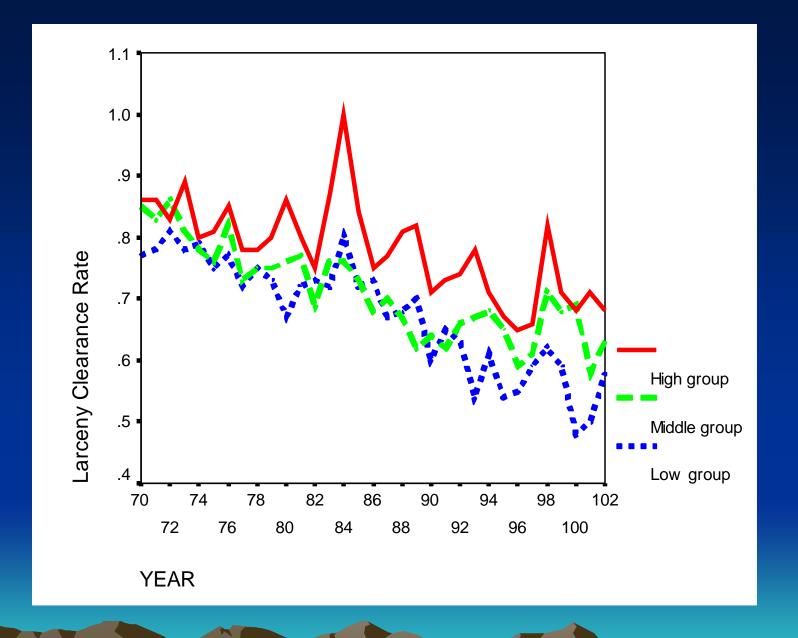
VARIATIONS IN 100 LARGEST CITIES

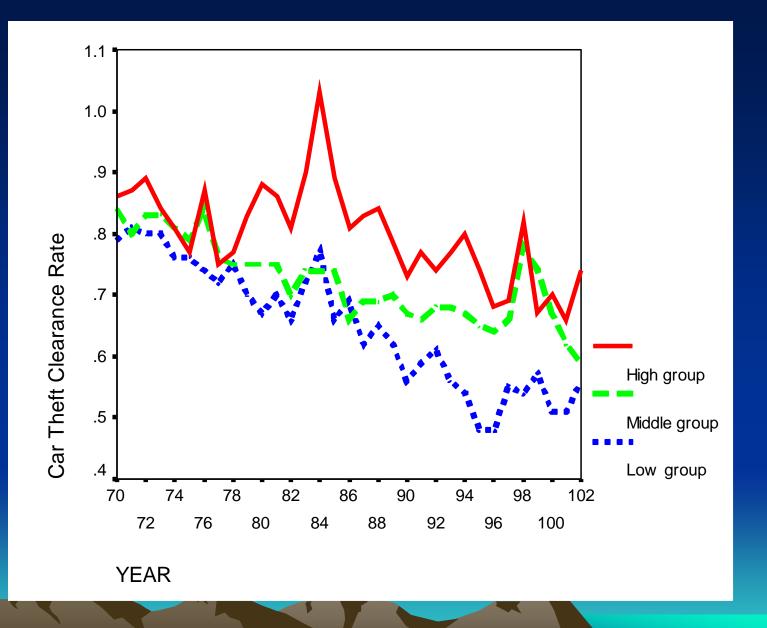


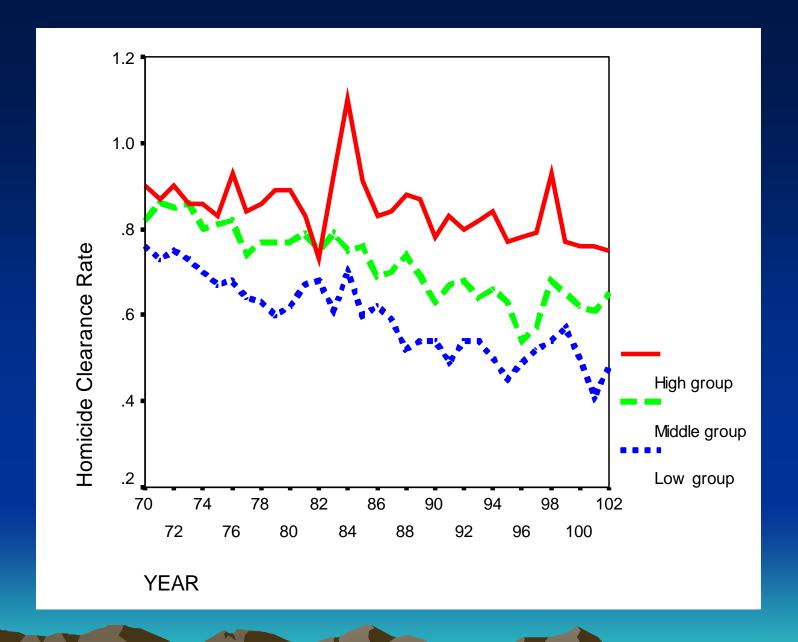
















JRSA

 ROLE OF STATE STATISTICAL ANALYSIS CENTERS



DESIGN

- USE OF FOCUS GROUPS
- DEVELOPMENT OF TWO INSTRUMENTS (OVER 250 VARIABLES PER CASE)
 - INCIDENT
 - INVESTIGATION
- ORGANIZATIONAL DIMENSION
- NOW SIX YEARS OLD

Homicide and Total Clearance Rate Levels, 1994, for 20 of the Largest Cities in the United States Homicide Clearance Level

Total Clearance Level	High	Medium	Low
High	City A Austin Dallas	Jacksonville Philadelphia San Jose	City C Boston
Medium	El Paso	Memphis Phoenix Seattle	San Diego Washington, D.C.
Low	City D	Columbus Houston	City B San Antonio
			San Francisco

·Cities A, B, C, and D are the cities selected for study.

Variable	Percent Change
Victim a gang or drug organization member **	582
White v. Hispanic *	166
Primary cause of death	
Rifle v. handgun **	231
Knife v. handgun **	114
Personal weapon v. handgun **	452
Weapon identified or suggested in police report **	217
Decedent in possession of a weapon **	92
Drugs not a circumstance *	117



Variable	Percent Change
Location (private v. public)**	171
Number of eyewitnesses (at least 1 vs. 0)**	85
Preemption for anticipated retaliation **	354
Conflict over money or property other than drugs **	155
Offender defending themselves **	288
Victim was a bystander killed inadvertently *	103
Attempt to get money to buy drugs *	256
Number of detectives assigned to case	



Variable	Percent Change
3 v. 1 **	121
4 v. 1 *	210
11 v. 1 *	105
Time for detective to arrive on scene	
30 to 60 minutes v. <30 minutes **	-62
Detective described crime scene in notes *	190
Detective followed up on witness information	
**	117

Variable	Percent Change
Warrant requested for a suspect **	4230
Crime scene	
Bar/club v. public area (street or park)*	325
Residence v. public area **	300
First officer notified the homicide unit **	127
First officer notified medical examiner's office **	134

Variable	Percent Change
First officer notified crime lab **	146
First officer attempted to locate witnesses **	147
Measured crime scene **	63
Weapon found at crime scene **	189
Witness at scene provided valuable information **	375
Circumstances of death **	196
Motivation for death **	189
Identification of offender **	2711
Identification of victim **	63

Variable	Percent Change
Location of offender **	292
Neighborhood survey provided valuable information **	60
Witness found who was not at crime scene (at least 1 v. 0)*	32
Neighbors of victim interviewed **	66
Family members, friends, coworkers, roommates, or neighbors provide valuable	163
information **	
Computer check conducted on suspect **	571
Computer check conducted on guns **	124
Computer check provided valuable information **	245
Computer system used	





Variable	Percent Change
Local Criminal Justice Information System (CJIS) **	46
Attending physician/medical personnel interviewed **	101
Detective present at postmortem examination **	90
Specimens collected from decedent **	45
Projectiles recovered from decedent **	67
Medical examiner prepared a body chart **	114
Confidential informants provided valuable information **	264
Surveillance used **	181

Reduced Model Predicting Clearance



- Offender African American
- Body chart of victim prepared
 - Computer check on decedent
 - Computer check on suspect **
 - Computer check on witnesses **
 - Computer check on guns
 - Used local Criminal Justice Information System (CJIS) *
 - Witness provided valuable information **
 - Friends/acquaintances interviewed
 - Neighbors interviewed
 - Three or more detectives assigned to the case
 - Homicide occurred in a private residence *
 - Eyewitness to the homicide
 - Homicide was not drug related *
 - Chance of solving the case



CONCLUSIONS

- POLICE MATTER
- SOME DO BETTER THAN OTHERS
- CIRCUMSTANCES ARE IMPORTANT BUT NOT OVERWHELMINGLY SO
- PROCESS VS. SUBSTANCE
- ORGANIZATIONAL FACTORS NEED ATTENTION